

1. What is Paul's admonition to the Corinthians in verse 20?
2. What does the instruction in verse 20 tell you about the Corinthians' misunderstanding of spiritual gifts and their use? Review verses 1-19 before answering this question.
3. What response on the part of the Corinthians would indicate that they were thinking like mature adults?

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4. What are some areas of the Christian life and our culture today you feel would benefit by mature biblical thinking?
5. The admonition of verse 20 isn't for the Corinthians only. We need to apply it too. How can we learn to think maturely? See 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 5:11-14.
6. In verse 21 Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12. We know from his “so then” at the beginning of verse 22 that his use of Isaiah 28 made his point about the appropriate use of tongues in the worship service. What does he want us to understand about God's use for tongues according to verse 22?

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7. Verse 22 says that tongues and prophecy are a sign. To whom are they a sign and for what purpose? For tongues see verse 21 and Acts 2:5-12. For prophecy see verses 3-4 and 2 Peter 1:19-21.
8. In verse 23 Paul further regulates the gift of tongues and its use in the church. Yet it appears that Paul is contradicting himself! Compare what Paul says about tongues in verse 22 with verse 23.
 - a. Be assured, *the Scriptures never contradict themselves!* So we must dig a bit further to unravel exactly what Paul means here. First, remember that Paul is addressing the use of the sign gifts within the church service. Second, take note of that little word *all* in the middle of verse 23 (The NIV uses *everyone*.).

- b. Now, we're ready to look at some verses to explain the apparent contradiction. See verses 27-28, 33, and 40. Now explain what Paul meant in verse 23.

- 9. Verse 24 has an *all* in it that also plays an important role in helping us understand what Paul means in this section. In contrast to verse 23 in which the example was given of *all* speaking in tongues, we have in verse 24 the example of *all* prophesying. Why was it permissible if *all prophesied* in the church service according to verses 24-25?
- 10. How did the sign gift of prophesying work and how was it used? See Luke 1:67-68; 1 Timothy 1:18; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21 for some examples.

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11. What was a potential outcome of prophesying in the church service according to verses 24-25?
12. We must remember that gifts of tongues, healing, miracles, and even prophesying were temporary sign gifts in the days that the New Testament was being written. As the Scriptures were recorded then the need for the sign gifts to validate the preaching of the Word was no longer necessary, since the churches could study the Scriptures to authenticate the message as true and from the Lord. Yet, we might be tempted toward envy of that time when God used the gift of prophesy to draw men to Himself. What do we need to remember that God has done for us in our day? See Isaiah 55:11; Jeremiah 23:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12.
13. Just like verse 15, verse 26 asks, “What is the outcome then, brethren (NASB)?” And just as in the case of verse 15, a better understanding is gained if we ask the same question we did in verse 15, “*What should we do, brethren?*” So, what is the answer for how a worship service is to be conducted? See verse 26.

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14. What should our focus and purpose be each time we gather together as a body (verse 26)?
15. Define *edification* [Strong's #3619 (ESV *building up*; NIV *strengthening*)]. See the following verses to gain insight into the meaning of the word: Romans 14:19; 2 Corinthians 10:8; Ephesians 4:11-16.
16. If our purpose in gathering together as believers is for the purpose of edification, then what is the means God has given in which this is accomplished? See Acts 15:35; 18:11; 20:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-13; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:2.

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17. What instruction was given about using the biblical gift of tongues when the church was gathered? See verses 27-28. What are the principles behind these particular commands? See verses 2-6, 12, and 19.
18. How is God's plan for the biblical gift of tongues different than what we see in some churches today? What have those churches failed to comprehend about God's plan for the worship service?
19. Next, Paul addresses how the gift of prophecy was to be regulated in the church. What do you learn from verses 29-32?

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20. How did the instructions in verses 29 and 32 provide protection for the rest of the believers waiting to hear the Word of the Lord? See also Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21; 1 John 4:1-3. For the Old Testament regulations on prophesying see Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:18-22.
21. Every regulation, every command, every instruction in the Scriptures stems from God's character and this passage is no exception. What do we learn about God in verse 33? How does understanding that aspect of God's character give us insight into His commands for church worship? See also verse 40 and 1 Timothy 3:15.

22. What are some principles for worship today that we can glean from these instructions given to the churches in their formative, transitional years? What have you gleaned from this lesson that has blessed you as you consider God's plan for His church?

The apostle Paul was very clear in pointing out that “God is not a God of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33). Where pandemonium rules, we can be certain God is not the author of it. ~John MacArthur¹

Both our worship style and attitude reflect on the God we claim to be worshiping (cf. 11:17–34). ~Robert Utley²

How can we ensure that everything is done in a fitting and orderly way? Whose special responsibility is this in the local church? ~Derek Prime³

¹John MacArthur, *Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses Its Will to Discern* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994), pg. 172.

²Robert James Utley, Volume 6, *Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians*, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2002), pg. 165.

³Derek Prime, *Opening Up 1 Corinthians* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2005), pg. 130.